Opening 1 / 11

Good evening, everyone. I'm Hannah, Piper's big sister, and I have held that title for twenty-nine years. Piper will tell you it comes with a lot of bossing. I'd like to tell you what it really came with.

Part 2 2 / 11

When Piper was five and I was nine, a summer storm knocked out the power on our street. Our house went black. Piper came down the hall with her blanket over her head and said, very politely, that she was not scared, she just wanted to sit near me.

Part 3 3 / 11

So we sat in the hallway, because it had no windows. I found a flashlight with weak batteries and a library book about a lighthouse keeper. I read it out loud, one page at a time, and I did all the voices. The keeper was a growly man. The seagull was a nervous woman. Piper laughed so hard the flashlight shook.

Part 4 4 / 11

The lights came back on around ten. Piper looked up and said, 'Wait. Don't stop. Not yet.' I didn't stop. We finished the book on the hallway floor, and I got in trouble the next morning for being up past midnight. It was worth it.

Part 5 5 / 11

I think about that night more than Piper knows. She taught me something without trying. Being the older sister is not about being in charge. It is about being the one who holds the light a little longer, so the other person can find out the dark is only a hallway.

Part 6 6 / 11

Piper grew up and got braver than I ever was. She moved to a new city on her own. She learned to fix her own bike chain from a video. She started a job where she is the person everyone calls when something breaks. Somewhere along the way, she became the one holding the light, and most days it is for me.

Part 7 7 / 11

Here is what I know about my sister. She hums while she cooks, and she is always off key. She writes thank-you notes by hand, and she keeps the stamps in a cookie tin.

Part 8 8 / 11

Dev, the first time I met you, you arrived at our parents' house with a headlamp in your jacket pocket. I asked why. You said you never go anywhere without one. I looked at my sister. She was already smiling at you like you'd shown up with the sun.

Part 9 **9 / 11**

Dev, I can finally hand over a job I've had since I was nine. I'm not stepping away, and she will always have my number. But when she gets scared, or tired, or just wants to sit near someone, I know you will be there with your headlamp, and I know you will do the voices if she asks.

Part 10 **10 / 11**

Piper, thank you for sitting near me all these years. I love you, and I am so proud of the person you turned into.

Closing **11 / 11**

Everyone, please raise your glass to Piper and Dev: may your lights stay on, and may the dark always be only a hallway.